

THE
DOVE-COTE:

OR, THE

ART of BREEDING

PIGEONS,

A

POEM.



LONDON:

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THE
DOVE-COTE.



WHAT Care and Industry the Dove
requires
Of him who the soft, tender Kind
admires ;

What Food will please the gentle, breeding Race,
And how to build the Cote, and in what Place,
I sing . ———

First for your Doves chuse out a peaceful Seat,
 Far from the City-Noise, a Calm Retreat ;
 The City's odious to the harmless Dove ;
 Business suits ill with Innocence and Love.
 Beside, in Towns the Rat's insidious Kind
 Too often in the Cote an Entrance find ;
 Break the thin Eggs, and make with fruitless Pain
 Th'eluded Mother sit whole Months in vain.

Nor must you with less Providence remove
 Their Dwelling from the River and the Grove:
 For oft within the Grove's deceitful Shade
 The Hawk his Prey is ready to invade ;
 When sailing over, struck with sudden Fright
 The trembling Dove precipitates her Flight ;
 The Hawk pursues along the airy Space ;
 The Eye can equal scarce the rapid Chace.

The

The Sound of neighb'ring Waters breaks their

Rest,

And fills with nightly Fears their tim'rous Breast;

Or leaving else for Ease their unhatch'd Care,

The Mothers to the cooling Stream repair;

And thence returning with their flabby Wings,

The Cold destruction to the Foetus brings.

That Situation will your Doves delight,

Where the Air's pure, and nothing stops the Sight.

Then place your Cote, where from the rising

Ground

The Fields in Prospect open lye around;

Whether the Flow'ry Grass o'erspreads the Plain,

Or the Land's cover'd with rich, golden Grain.

Were Marble not too costly, or too rare,

I'd bid you not the beauteous Stone to spare;

But

But yet if Marble your Estate denies,
More vulgar Stones for Use and Need suffice.

But then be sure to glaze the painted House,
T'elude the Weasel, and the climbing Mouse :
Nor let the narrow Cote be too confin'd ;
For Liberty is pleasing to the Kind.

But yet too strong a Light their Young molests,
And therefore 'tis in Holes they make their Nests.

Two Windows will let in sufficient Day,
One to receive in Winter the warm Ray,
Full-south : Another in the Dome above,
For Light, and easy Passage to the Dove.
And let the artful Wire, and shining Glass
Leave Room but for the stooping Bird to pass,
To frustrate thus the Hawk's malicious Spite,
The soaring Gléad, and treach'rous Bird of Night.

Cover

Cover the Top with painted Slate or Tile,
 (For Paint will Birds as well as Men beguile)
 That pleas'd they may enjoy the Sun's bright Rays,
 And bask, and prune their Feathers in his Blaze.

Then, hide the inner Walls with limy White,
 The Dove will in that Colour take Delight;
 Whether that Colour suits a candid Mind,
 Or in the Cleanliness they Pleasure find.

But what's the chiefest Master-piece of Art,
 Is into equal Cells the House to part.

What various Forms Invention has display'd
 Of Nests in diff'rent Kind and Order made!
 I've known some Houses hung with Baskets round;
 In others, Boxes made of Wood, are found;

Some

Some leave more wisely, as they think, a Place
 Betwixt the solid Stones of ample Space :
 But you such Effays of rude Art despise,
 For Inconvenience from all arise.

The chilling Stone will cold Distempers breed,
 And Wood will harbour Worms and Insect-feed.
 Of well-bak'd Brick be your Partitions made,
 Or else, with Mortar well-prepar'd, inlaid ;
 For thus no Vermin will their Holes infest,
 Or Winter rot the Eggs, and starve the Nest.

This Labour o'er, your Care must needs succeed,
 To stock the House, and make a gen'rous Breed.
 For there are Doves of very diff'rent Kind :
 Some white, of larger Size, and gentler Mind,
 Their Feet all feather'd like their glossy Neck ;
 But do not what's for Show alone respect :

For

For while they tread the Ground with stately Pace,
 Ordure and Filth their Plumage oft disgrace:
 Whence they pollute the House with noisome Stains,
 And but encrease the curious Master's Pains.
 Nay, while they brooding sit upon the Nest,
 The Eggs cleave to their dirty Feet or Breast;
 And flying thence, the Young are often found,
 The Shells being broken, sprawling on the Ground.

Against this Evil prudent then provide,
 Nor spare the Beauty of their feather'd Pride;
 But think, if Pity set your Thoughts at Strife,
 How useless Beauty is compar'd to Life.

With these the *Cyprian* Pigeon justly vies,
 Majestic with a Crest, and equal Size,
 The Colour white, or mixt with glitt'ring dyes.

B

Both

For

Both Kinds are good for Breed, and all the Year
 Indulge their Love, and tender Off-spring rear;
 Their am'rous Warmth no Intermission knows,
 When the Lake freezes, and keen Boreas blows :
 But ev'ry Month the billing Couple breeds,
 And the sweet Labour to itself succeeds.

This latter Kind I would prefer to all,
 Were but the Care like that of others small;
 And wou'd they forraging the Country fly,
 When the Fields plenteous Food abroad supply.

Another Kind more frequently is found,
 Of smaller Size, that startles at each Sound,
 And ready to take Wing, looks wildly round :
 Their Colour blue, markt with no brighter Stain ;
 Beside, not useful for the Keeper's Gain.

'To live at large is what the Kind delights,
 And that and Love are diff'rent Appetites:
 Whence in the colder Seasons of the Year,
 Impatient Love's uneasy Yoke to bear,
 They leave their Nests, and seek the distant Fields
 While Exercise and Food the Winter yields:
 But as Amends they for themselves provide,
 And rarely are with Food at home supply'd.

The diff'rent Sorts receive a diff'rent Name,
 Now call'd the Wild, the Foreign, or the Tame.

Might I advise, I'd bid you mix the Kinds;
 For who, without some Art, Convenience finds?
 Thus will your Cote with num'rous Flocks abound,
 That breed all Year, and fly the Country round.

When the new Colony you thus have chose,
 Remember for twelve Days the House to close,
 That so they may forget their former Seat,
 To other Loves indulge, and better Meat.

But with this Caution take another Care,
 For if you let them fly at first too far,
 In the strange Place they're idly apt to stray,
 And home-returning often lose their Way :
 Be prudent then, and at th'Approach of Night,
 Let them at first but try a neighb'ring Flight :
 So by Degrees they'll learn the airy Road,
 Nor else with Safety will they rove abroad.

Next, that the Birds may not desert the Cote,
 Are practic'd Stratagems of diff'rent Sort.

Some

Some place upon the Dome a Stag's dried Head ;
 By some within are Salt and' Ashes spread :
 But leave such Magic to deluded Minds,
 In such fond Superstition Entrance finds,

Do you in Plenty strew the golden Grain,
 For that will best th'inconstant Bird detain ;
 Nor fear your Pigeons then will leave the House,
 For the high Spire, or for a fairer Spouse.

But when in Earth the sprouting Corn is laid,
 Or nothing seen above but the green Blade,
 They search the Ground in vain with careful Eyes,
 Unless the Master's Hand their Want supplies ;
 Hence often they seek out a kinder Place,
 By Doves Injustice is believ'd Disgrace.

Then

Then let Compassion not neglect their Need,
For they'll with Fruitfulness repay the Deed.

When the ninth Hour stirs up their Appetite,
You'll see them frequent in the Court alight :
Nor you to feed them in the Morning spare,
And when they to the Cote at Night repair ;
But when the dazling Sun is mounted high,
Th'ungrateful Banquet to the Birds deny :
For the Dove give to sleep the Noon of Day,
Not *Spain* observes this Custom more than they.

Let the best Food in Spring their Taste allure,
In Winter coarser Fair they will endure :
For Spring with gen'rous Blood shou'd fill the Veins,
And gen'rous Food the purple Tide maintains.

Refuse

Refuse not then your pamper'd Birds to treat
 With Peas, sweet Cummin, or the fairest Wheat;
 For when the Snow falls thick, and cold Winds rage,
 Vetches and Beans their Hunger will assuage,

Some never in the Cote will feed the Dove,
 Not to disturb the Young, or Dams above;
 But call them in the Court to take their Food,
 Accustom'd to a Sound well-understood.

If then this Method please your Judgment best,
 Whether the Sign by Whistling is exprest,
 Or else a tinkling Din, they'll flock around,
 And cover, at the Call, th'allotted Ground:
 Pleas'd you may see your Doves in Strife engage,
 And little Bosoms swell with Fits of Rage.

But

But if you view one loiter slow behind,
 Nor with the rest to feed, as once, inclin'd,
 Salt will renew again its Appetite,
 And make it in its usual Food delight.

Besides, from Filth their Dwelling you must
 free,
 Nor leave the Dead, sad Sight of Misery;
 For the nice Bird such Objects sees with Pain,
 Nor nigh the foul Infection will remain.

To cleanse the House your Servants then com-
 mand,
 And spread the fruitful Dung about the Land:
 No Manure makes the Corn more strongly rise,
 Or the Grass please with brighter Green the Eyes.

But

But above all, Drive far the Kite away,
 Or else your Flock will soon become his Prey,
 Who always watches for the tender Kind,
 Such Rancour's in the cruel Tyrant's Mind.
 You'll see him idly soar in Rings above,
 As if he meant no Malice to the Dove;
 But from the Height he darts his piercing Eyes,
 And makes the unsuspecting Bird his Prize.
 Or else he hides himself in gloomy Shades,
 And sudden thence the trembling Flock invades;
 You'll pitying view your Doves all scatter'd fly,
 And cut with darting Wings the sounding Sky.

Revengeful War with the fierce Robber wage,
 Nor let his lawless Lust at Pleasure rage;
 But mark him as he skims his airy Round,
 And with your Eye direct the leaden Wound:

But if no Gun's at hand, at least afar
With a strong Voice the startled Savage scare.

Further, be cautious of th'effect of Time
For when the Dove is past her vigour's Prime,
And now no longer, or but seldom lays,
(The Privilege of youthful, sprightly Days)
To separate her useless from the rest,
For your Domestic no ungrateful Feast.

I next prepare their Manners to relate;
The Laws and Order of the peaceful State.

They always equal Liberty maintain,
Nor e'er will yield to a despotic Reign ;
But, like the golden Age, from Envy free,
Without the Terror of a Judge, agree.

Thus

Thus Men, e'er Vice and Rage dissolv'd their
Love,

Liv'd innocent and harmless as the Dove;
Nor the Surveyor then mark'd out the Plain,
But all in common gather'd the rich Grain.

Int'rest as yet had not debauch'd the Mind,
But ev'ry one was faithful, chaste, and kind :
No Nations yet had heard the Trumpet's Sound,
Or charging Armies shook the trembling Ground ;
But Man's blest Days did in sweet tenour run,
And Joy was then sincere beneath the Sun.

Thus, if small things with great I may compare,
The Dove lives free from Guilt, and void of Care ;
Nor ever sees with Grief the quiet State
Destroy'd by Jealousy and factious Hate,

Those Passions which the human Bosom tear,
And fill the World with Slaughter, Rage, and Fear.

You'd think one Will did all their Breasts inspire,
So uniform's the gentle Kind's Desire ;
They feed together, and together fly,
You'll see them sail along the crowded Sky,
Whether they to the sheafy Field repair
For Food, or wantonly they sport in Air :
If any stay within the Cote behind,
No Jealousy disturbs the other's Mind,
Left on their tender young they wreak their Spite,
And in the cruel Mischief take Delight.

In the warm Seasons they give loose to joy,
And Love and Pleasure all their Time employ :

Not

Nor when the Fields all-glaz'd with Snow display
 A chilling Scene, do they forget their Play,
 But spend within the Cote in Sports the Day.

But if with warmer Suns the Rigour smile,
 You'll see them bask upon the glossy Tile,
 And pick their Wings, and ruffled Feathers place,
 To please their Mate with a more beauteous Grace:
 Sometimes you'd think about their Neck was roll'd
 A glitt'ring Brede of Saphyr mixt with Gold;
 Sometimes the Carbuncle's more vivid Light
 Dazles the Eye, and hurts the feeble Sight:
 Not *Iris* paints the Heav'ns with brighter Dyes,
 Or with more sprightly Colours charms the Eyes.

In Winter they sometimes delight to range,
 And flying to the Fields desert the Grange;

There

There rove, or beat with their weak Bills in vain,
 Impatient for the Spring, the frosty Plain.

Where if they any wand'ring Stranger find,
 They strait make known an hospitable Mind ;
 Friendly lead on to their own Cote the Way,
 And kindly offer him to live as they.

But who with equal Praise can e'er commend
 The Care with which their unfetch'd Young they
 tend ?

For first, the Parents bare their feather'd Breast,
 To make more Light with the soft Down the Nest ;
 Then on the Eggs the weary Mother sits,
 Tho' by her Confort fed, and eas'd by Fits :
 But when the Young are from their Prison freed,
 They both alike to the joint Task succeed ;

Impatient

Impatient hear the hungry, feeble cry,
 And restless for new Food incessant fly.
 Nor when full-grown, do yet neglect their Charge,
 Till they can find their Food and live at large.
 Then other Young again become their Care,
 For some hatch ev'ry Month throughout the Year.

But what exalts the Dove's unrival'd Praise,
 And consecrates her in the Poet's Lays,
 Is that Fidelity in Love, we find
 So very rarely in the human Kind.
 Their Faith they keep inviolate to Death,
 And sigh out their true Souls in the last Breath.

When if it is the Male survives his Spouse,
 He mourns first the due Time his former Vows;
 But when her Image from his Mind is fled,
 He seeks another Virgin for his Bed.

'Tis

'Tis pleasant to observe, with what soft Air
 He makes his Courtship to the modest Fair :
 Sometimes he hopes by cooing to prevail,
 Sometimes by the spread Wing, and Sweeping
 Tail.

But if the fair one lets him take a Kiss,
 He then is sure to gain the nuptial Bliss ;
 She to his Love will easily comply,
 And plights her mutual Faith till one shall dye.

Such was *Columba*, when the *Cyprian Isle*
 (That happy Place where the Skies ever smile)
 Was sweetly govern'd by her gentle Sway :
 Her Lord and her the Kingdom did obey.

And if you've Leisure, hear, while I relate
 A Story full of strange, uncommon Fate.

The

The fairer Mother of a beauteous Race,
Columba was adorn'd with ev'ry Grace ;
 Who with two Daughters walking on the Shore,
 When Winds were hush'd, and Waves forgot to
 roar,
 Pleas'd with the Calm, and the gilt Barge at Hand,
 Wou'd needs put off to Sea, and leave the Land :
 The Town soon lessen'd to the distant Sight,
 And th'op'ning Coasts the curious Queen delight,
 The Winds first lightly o'er the Surface sweep,
 Then whistling whiten all the frothy Deep ;
 Black Clouds with sudden Horrors fright the Eyes,
 Blue Lightnings flash, and Night involves the Skies.
 While o'er the Seas th'increasing Tempest roars,
 And liquid Mountains thunder to the Shores.
 The polish'd Barge now tilts above the Tide,
 And breaking Waves strike off its gilded Pride.

Till by Degrees the dreadful Billows rise,
 Wash o'er the Deck, and foam against the Skies :
 A slender Plank divides them from the Grave,
 And Death appears on ev'ry tow'ring Wave.

How oft did now the Queen her Fate deplore,
 And wish she had not left the faithful Shore !
 But the loud Storm, that howls amongst the Shrowds,
 Tosses the Barge and lifts it to the Clouds :
 And tho' the Pilot strove the Port to gain,
 The Tempest drives him o'er the gloomy Main,
 Harraught they make at length an unknown Land,
 And issue mournful on the barren Sand.

Columba strives to cure her Daughters Fears,
 And chearful, tho' in deep Despair, appears ;

But

But as great Sorrow takes Delight in Shade,
 Beneath an Oak she with her Children laid.
 When turning to a Noise, she views with Fright
Milvus, a Robber of prodigious Might.
 To see his Looks, she easily divin'd
 The savage Purpose of his barb'rous Mind.
 Wing'd with new Fear, she swiftly runs away,
 And cries, My Daughters, ah! be not his Prey.

What shou'd they do? For now the Foe drew
 nigh,
 And now his lengthen'd Shadow reach'd their Eye;
 They look around, but no kind Help appears,
 Yet trust in Heav'n, and Pow'r of virtuous Pray'rs,
 Ah! chang'd to Birds, ah! may we rather fly,
 Or any way, than lose our Honour, die.

They said: When strange, and wond'rous to the
Sight!

They on new Pinions took a quicker Flight ;
Now pierce the Clouds, now skim along the Main,
And turn'd to Doves, the *Cyprian* Isle regain.

When *Milvus* sees them thus escape in Air,
Mad with the Loss, and raving with Despair,
The caitiff Villain made a hasty Pray'r. }
Oh *Hermes*! if thy Godhead's not a Lye,
Thou only Favourer of such as I,
Oh! change me, change me with thy magic Wand,
And let me catch them in whatever Land.

The Rascal moved for once in Part the God,
Who lightly touch'd him with his pow'rful Rod ;

The

The Charm immediately contracts his Jaws,
 And arms him with a Beak and crooked Claws :
 Then on stiff Pinions after them he flies,
 For ray'nous still, a Kite he cleaves the Skies.

But now *Columba* reach'd the *Cyprian* Shore,
 Glad that at least her latest Fear was o'er :
 Then stops, and hopes her Daughters may be near ;
 But they, alas ! no longer Daughters were :
 For Stock-Doves to the Woods they shap'd their
 Flight,
 And liv'd remote from Man's unwelcome Sight.

Now she her former Palace might behold,
 With painted spires, and glitt'ring Roofs of Gold :
 And what more pleases than the charming Place,
 Delighted views again her Confort's Face.

How

How often wou'd she her sad Fate disclose,
 And tell the mournful Series of her Woes,
 But since she could not, to her Lord wou'd fly,
 And seem to court him with an am'rous Eye ;
 Or in a cooing Accent else complain,
 If so at least she might assuage her Pain.
 But all her Arts inspir'd by Wit and Love
 In ign'rant Breasts could only Wonder move ;
 At most some Kindness : Yet she *Cyprus* loves,
Cyprus for beauteous Virgins fam'd, and Doves.

Hence like the Queen, the Dove delights in
 Show ;

No other Fault did chaste *Columba* know :
 Still on her Head a native Crown appears,
 And for the Robe she golden Plumage wears !

Still

Still she preserves her gentle humane Mind,
And Chastity is sacred to the Kind.

But now, my Muse delighted to rehearse
The Dove's Oeconomy in blameless Verse,
Finish'd, perceives th'amusing Enterprize,
Too happy if it pleases beauteous Eyes;
Amongst the Young and Fair Reception finds,
Instructs, delights, nor injures virtuous Minds.

F I N I S.



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